“Thyroid Disorders”

Deaf Health Talks
Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf
October 21, 2010
Supporters

- Deaf Health Community Committee Members
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- Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf (“REAP”)
Overview

- What does the thyroid gland do for us?
- What are common types of thyroid disorders?
- What are causes for thyroid disorders?
- How can we protect our thyroid?
- How can we best work with your doctors?
What is the main thing the thyroid gland does for us?

- Controls our body’s metabolism - this means how we use energy
Thyroid Gland

- Gland makes hormones to regulate body and organs
- *Hormones are chemical messengers to tell the body what to do*
  - Help control body temperature
  - Helps body make energy
  - Helps control organ function
- Weighs one ounce!

*Picture: abc.net.au*
Thyroid Gland

- Makes thyroid hormones that help regulate body’s metabolism
- Needs iodine to make hormones
Iodine: A Necessary Mineral for the Thyroid

- Iodine is required by the thyroid gland to function and make thyroid hormones
  - Naturally occurs in soil and ocean
  - 40% of people in world are deficient in iodine!
  - Can cause a goiter

*http://www.thyroid.org/patients/faqs/iodine_deficiency.html
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Food Source</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Milk</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Water</td>
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</tbody>
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Most Americans get enough iodine from iodized table salt and certain foods (eggs, dairy, meat, seafood).
How common is thyroid issues?

- **Hypothyroidism** ("Slow Thyroid")
  - 3.7% of Americans have this (1)
    - More common in women and in whites
    - Most common in older people

- **Hyperthyroidism** ("Fast Thyroid")
  - Less than 1% of Americans have this (2)
    - Slightly more common in women and whites
    - Usually younger and middle aged people

What is the most common cause of hypothyroidism (“slow thyroid”) in the world?

A. Infection
B. Autoimmune- body attacks itself on the thyroid
C. Radiation exposure
D. Lack of iodine
E. Alien snatching our thyroid glands
What is the most common cause of hypothyroidism ("slow thyroid") in the USA?

A. Infection
B. Autoimmune- body attacks itself on the thyroid
C. Radiation exposure
D. Lack of iodine
E. Alien snatching our thyroid glands
Symptoms of Hypothyroidism (“Slow Thyroid”)

- Fatigue (feel tired)
- Depressed
- Constipation (unable to poop)
- Weight gain and obesity
- Leg swelling (edema)

- Dry skin
- Muscle cramps
- Very sensitive to cold
- Hair loss
- Poor concentration
Symptoms of Hyperthyroidism ("Fast Thyroid")

- Fast heart rate
- Irregular heart rate
- Unable to sleep
- Palpitations
- Bone loss
- "Bulging eyes"

- Weight loss
- Nervous and anxious
- Very sensitive to cold
- Easily upset
- Muscle weakness
Goiter

- Enlargement of thyroid gland
- Rarely cancer
- Can be from iodine deficiency
- Doctors will check for large nodules
- Can be seen with both hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism

1. meddean.luc.edu
2. thachers.org
Grave’s Disease

- Causes hyperthyroidism ("fast thyroid")
- Body accidentally makes the thyroid gland work faster
- Thyroid stare (eyes get pushed forward)
- Treated with anti-thyroid medications
Treatment of Hyperthyroidism

- **Radioactive iodine**
  - Most Common Treatment
- **Medications**
  - Tapazole (methimazole)
  - PTU (propylthiouracil)
- **Surgery**
Common Types of Hypothyroidism

- **Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis**
  - Body attacks the thyroid gland - makes it fail (autoimmune)

- **Iodine Deficiency**
  - Thyroid unable to make hormones which require iodine to “build”
Treatment of Hypothyroidism

- Replace thyroid hormone
  - Synthetic (Man made)
    - Synthroid
    - Levoxyl
    - Levothyroid
    - Levothyroxine
  - Animal thyroid
    - Most are from pigs or cows
Thyroid Replacement

- Doctor will gradually increase dose until lab values are normal
  - Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) will be checked 6-8 weeks after a change in the dose or medication
  - May require multiple changes
How do doctors know if you have thyroid issues?

- History is key!
- Physical exam
  - Front of neck mass (bump) - goiter
  - Bulging eyes
  - Fine Hair
  - Brittle nails
  - Heart rate
  - Skin texture
Thyroid Testing

- Blood Lab testing
  - TSH is most common screening test
- Ultrasound of thyroid
- Thyroid Scan
- Thyroid fine needle biopsy (gets a small tissue to look under microscope)
Prevention and Management

- Avoid radiation treatments or exposure if able
- Caution with certain medications
  - Lithium (used for bipolar)
  - Amiodarone (used for heart)
    * Both can make it easier for you to have hypothyroidism

- Follow directions on thyroid replacement medications can avoid overtreating or undertreating your thyroid disease
  - No skipping doses!
Thyroid cancer is biggest concern in the short term

- Potassium iodine can help reduce risk
- Department of health will let you know if you need to take it
- Young people and children are at higher risk (over 40 years old usually don’t need it)
Preparing for your appointment
Who to call?

- Primary Care Physician (PCP)
  - Family Medicine (Family Physician)
  - Internal Medicine (Internist)

- Specialist
  - Endocrinologist
Preparing for your appointment
Be prepared! Time is limited!

- Pre-appointment restrictions?
- Write down any symptoms
- Write down personal information
- Make a list of all medications
  - Name, dosage, frequency
- Bring a family member or friend
- Write down questions to ask
Questions for the Doctor

- What causes my symptoms?
- What kinds of tests needed?
- Is my condition temporary or chronic?
- What’s do-do best?
- I have other health problems. How can I manage all at same time?
- Any restrictions?
- Should I see a specialist? How much? Insurance covered?
- Any generic medication?
- Any brochures or other printed information I can take home with?
Questions from the Doctor

- When did symptoms start?
- Symptoms once a while or continuous?
- How severe?
- What seem to improve your symptoms?
- What seem to make your symptoms worse?
Lifestyle and Home Remedies For Hyperthyroidism

- Excessive weight loss: Improve diet
  ◆ Add more calories and protein
  ◆ Seek help of Dietitian
  ◆ Temporary

- Excessive weight gain: Healthy eating
  ◆ Watch sodium and calcium

- Thinning of bones: Get enough Calcium
  ◆ Prevent Osteoporosis
  ◆ Dosage depends on your age
  ◆ Ask Doctor about Vitamin D
Lifestyle and Home Remedies For Graves’ Disease

- Apply cool towels to your eyes
- Wear sunglasses
- Eye drops
- Keep your head higher than body
- OTC creams for swollen skin
  - Talk to Pharmacist
Coping & Support For Hyperthyroidism

- Other ways to take care of you during treatment
- Get regular exercise
  - Feel better
  - Improves muscle tone and cardiovascular system
  - Weight-bearing exercise important for Graves’ disease
  - Increase your energy level
- Learn relaxation techniques
  - Gain positive outlook (even living with disease)
  - Graves’ disease is stress-related
Questions???

- Thank you!
- Next Deaf Health Talk Thursday, November 18 at 7 pm
- Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf